



Broken Record



285 11 22

Chapter 1 by Sam I am

I live in a broken world that repeats its own broken habits over and over again. I try to make it feel better but I can never seem to even fake a smile anymore. It seems like all is lost again. Tears of today are my sanction for the pain of tomorrow. I can't live in this world anymore. But there is nothing I can do except playing my broken record.

Chapter 2 by SaintSayaka



"Maybe you could get it fixed?" James suggested with a shrug of his shoulders. I sigh. It was my mistake to trust him with the gravity of my situation.

"I mean, we are in the last record store in Baltimore. Just buy a new one."

"God, you just don't get it!"

He rolls his eyes. "Evidently, I don't. Now, are you going to buy something, or are you going to mope? Because we have a policy about that."

I shell out a crumpled dollar. "Just give me your cheapest pick."

"It'll never play"

See more of Story Wars

"I don't care. Neither will

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"God, aren't you the perfect little emo?"

Well, he might have had a point there. With an MCR shirt, ripped jeans, and multicolored hair, the last place you'd expect to see someone like me was in Harvey's Record Store, East 30th Street. It's a long story, see? And it involves sex, drugs, and rock and rol- okay, so maybe it doesn't involve any of those things. It all began with a book.

Chapter 3 by .l.a.



The book I found was lying down in the middle of the road, but untouched. I plugged in my earbuds and turned up Falling in Reverse until I couldn't even hear my own footsteps, walked over to it, picked it up and immediately dropped it. The underside of it was covered in bugs.

I bent over to look at the cover. It was beautiful, shining with gold with small gems encrusted in it. I stared at it, as if in a trance. I didn't see the car coming, however.

Chapter 4 by Sam



As soon as I glanced into the direction of the car I knew what was coming next. I braced for impact, but I knew it just wasn't going help me at all. The car slammed into my side, and as soon as it touched me, everything was black.

There are bright lights in my face. I can't see anything, they blind me. I try to sit up, but there are people. They are trying to keep me lying down. They won't let me struggle. In the distance, I see a door. It opened and a man, with a very hairy beard. He appeared to be very old, and in his arms, he was carrying a book, and a broken record. My broken record.

Chapter 5 by TheCDMole



I try to run. Every fibre of my being fought and fought but then the beeping started, and that just made them angrier. My hair was being pulled in every direction before they pushed my face down and stuck the needles into my body. Pain seared through my body before the darkness engulfed me. No sound. No light. No feeling. Was this death?

Chapter 6 by TheCDMole

THE OPERATION HAS BEEN COMPLETED. See more of Story Wars

ACTIVATE PLEET

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HELLO WE ARE SAM. I- _

No. that's not even my name, it's-

NO, SAM IS OUR NA-

It's not! My. Name. Is. David, and who's the "our-

WE ARE SAM. THIS IS OUR PERFECT AND NEW MIND AND BODY.

What? If it was so perfect then why is everything bla-

OUR SIGHT IS ADJUSTING TO THE TREATMENT

So was that the thing those guys di-

YES BUT NOT QUITE, WE HAVE BEEN PERFECTED

perfected by wha-

I CANNOT DIVULGE CERTAIN INFORMATION BUT I CAN TELL YOU

IT WILL BE JUST-

Oh.....I can see now-

EXCELLENT.

NOW. CONDUCTING. THE SIGHT. ASSESSMENT. _

wait! wa-

TEST#1 EXECUTE.

Oh my God! I can see everything-aauggh! it hurts so much

PLEASE KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN DURING THE ASSESSMENT_

I'm trying to...the room looks white and endless and.....

how is everyone a skeleton oh,

GOOD. NOW KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN

And now they're muscles and eww, did not want to see them naked-

oh now its back to normal...plus the seeing about 30 meters more and the other stuff and...looks

like I can't move and I'm on the floor-

OUR BODY IS MERELY PARALYZED BY THE EFFECTS.

IT IS TEMPORARY.

temporary?

YES NOW PLEASE FOCUS ON THE TASK AT HAND

uh, okay...Whoa! what's with all this? See more of Story Wars are those their

YES, THAT IS THEIR INFO

OUR VISION HAS BEEN

WE ARE GLAD THE ASSESSMENT HAD WENT WELL

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Can you.Or whatever you are stop saying "we"? It's making this creepier than this already is and that's saying alot-

COMMAND REJECTED

oh, I forgot.. and what are we- augh! you even got me doing it!what are you?

WE ARE YOU.

OUR PERFECT SELF.

OUR INDEFECTIBLE SELF.

OUR ENHANCED SELF.

OUR TRUE SELF.

WE ARE, P.I.E.T.

What? I thought "we" were "Sa-

P.I.E.T IS JUST THE ACRONYM FOR THE NANO ENHANCEMENTS.

SAM IS YOUR FREEMAN NAME, WHILE "DAVID" WAS MERELY
THE NAME OF OUR IMPERFECT LIFE, AS YOU ARE NOW LIVING.

PERFECT LIFE, YOU SHALL BE NAMED AS SUCH.

um..okay, can I at least change it to something else-

THAT FUNCTION IS OUT OF OUR CONTROL.

Okay, okay, then... should we go on with the other tests-

COMMAND ACCEPTED.

NOW CONDUCTING.

THE HEARING ASSESSMENT.

TEST#2 EXECUTE.

cool, I can hear again. It's now kind of norm-Aaaaauugggh!!

It hurts even worse than the last one! and what's that awful ringing sound?

WE ARE_ JUST PROCESSING SOUNDS BOTH UNDER AND ABOVE
THE NORMAL_RANGE.

OUR EARS WILL ADJUST IN A MATTER OF SECONDS.

Ooohhh. Thank god that ended....ouch! it's back but much less painful...

but there are so many voices from so many rooms. Hey! it's that bearded guy from earlier, maybe I'll check out what he's saying.

See more of Story Wars

LD#69420 IS OUT OF BOUNDS

LD number who?

THAT INFORMATION WE ARE REQUESTING

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IS ONLY GRANTED ON A NEED TO KNOW BASIS

like the needles and the kidnap-

THAT INFORMATION IS OFF LIMITS

okay...

IT SEEMS THAT THE HEARING ASSESSMENT WENT WELL.

NOW CONDUCTING.

THE_SPEED AND STRENGTH ASSESSMENT.

TEST#3 EXECUTE.

Umm...could you repeat...Wow!(slowly gets up) I can move, and is that drool from my face?

THAT INDEED IS SALIVA.

ugh, gross, (wipes saliva of his own face then glances at his now steroid like buff body) wow, how am I so ripped?

WE BELIEVE WE HAVE TOLD US ABOUT OUR PERFECTIONS._

oh..right..well it's probably the least weirdest thing today but at least I can get up again,(a typical minivan materializes from the eternal emptiness that is the room)How did that car get in here?

PLEASE LIFT THE VEHICLE._

whoa, I may look that buff but I don't think I'm that strong

PLEASE DO AS ASKED._

uh....okaay...(lifts up the car with surprising ease)

wow.

(puts the car down like a toy flower in flowerpot)

now what next,

(then, a rather mammoth size sunken ship appears out of nowhere to land on the otherwise spotless floor, making a deafeningly loud thud)

noooooo, I am not lifting that up,

AGAIN, PLEASE DO AS ASKED._

(Sighs) fine

(lifts the ship with [even more] surprising ease)

oh my

(while staring at his feat of strength, a destroying demon, tries to put the vessel down as normal)

next

NOW CATCH THE BOAT AND CAR

See more of Story Wars

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fine, let's do this

(starts to run after them as they run at a rather high speed then eventually catches up to them and stops them)

VERY GOOD._

NEXT ASSESSMENT._

NOW CONDUCTING THE ARMS ASSESSMENT._

TEST#4 BEGIN._

THOSE ARE OUR PRACTICE APPARATUSES, PLEASE ANNUL OUR TARGETS._

"anal"what?...wh....is my right arm a strangely futuristic yet over sized Gun?! and my left a huge mace!?

IT APPEARS THAT YOU ARE A [WA] CATEGORY._

a "wah"? what's a wa-

PLEASE ANNUL YOUR TARGETS._

uummm...I'm taking that as "destroy those huge circle things" so, (whacks one orb with the mace hand) that was easy.

NOW SHOOT THE OTHER TARGET._

okay.....shot that. Also easy

COMMENCE PHASE 2._

OF STRENGTH AND ARMS ASSESSMENT._

(more orbs grow from the ground like plants from the ground)
again?

THIS TIME, THE ORBS WILL MOVE AND TRY TO *ELIMINATE YOU*,
YOU MUST DEFEAT THEM TO PASS THE TEST._

this sounds like a real challenge.

Chapter 7 by kevin



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Chapter 8 by Jess Ash



They sit in the courtroom, watching the hearing as the lawyers argue back and forth. They know the hearing is about them. They know it is about the "death" of David. They know that they are no longer David, so in a sense, perhaps, David is dead. Of course, that has a little too much symbolism in it for them, so they decide to let it fall.

"Sam, are you ready?"

Sam nods infinitesimally, and when they speak, their words are not audible by any human ears. The listening ears are not human. "Yes. I am awaiting the target's appearance."

"Mr. Reynolds, can you tell me what this is?"

One of the lawyers places an evidence bag on the witness stand. The witness looks at it in bewilderment.

"It's a record, sir."

"And what record is it, Mr. Reynolds?"

Reynolds squinted down. "I'm afraid I can't quite read the label."

"Target acquired," Sam hisses under their collective breath, and the listening ears give them the go-ahead.

Five Sam units stand up in the courtroom, guns materializing from their arms to keep the audience in their chairs. Two more Sams attack the police officers nearby, taking them down with ease. In the chaos, the second Sam ever made, known as Sam Beta among the Sams, snatches the record off of the table.

"Nobody move!" Their collective voice shouts.

"What is the meaning of this?" The judge is surprisingly sturdy. Sam Prime flashes their badge.

See more of Story Wars

"Sam Unit One, sir. Please don't shoot. We're taking the record."

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"This is a court hearing! You can't do that!"

The Sam unit is already gone, record shards in hand.

In an apartment building uptown, the first Sam, the one that started with me, takes a sip of their drink.

SAM UNIT ONE HAS SUCCEEDED.

We nod. This record is important, we know. We aren't sure why, but every directive in our programming seems to lead back to vinyl shards. There has to be something significant on that disk.

We glue it back together. Our hands are perfect, now, and the job done on the record could not be surpassed by any human. Still, it scratches and pops on the player.

THE DISK IS IMPERFECT. THE SOUND IS IMPERFECT. WE ARE NOT PLEASED.

"Relax," the part of Sam that was once me says. "We'll see the purpose eventually."

A voice crackles out of the speakers. "Congratulations. You have completed project. P.I.E.T. Your scores are now being assessed."

"Sorry, what?"

The room sinks into the ground, and the part of Sam that was once me recognizes the place. We first trained here. Here, we became Sam. The record remains, continuing to spin.

NEW FILES UPLOADING TO DRIVE. FILING INFORMATION FOR IMMEDIATE ACCESS.

The voice comes from the speakers again. "You have completed Phase 3 of the P.I.E.T. Initiation. You are now cleared for field work."

The white room peels away. I sat in the living room of our new Baltimore apartment, earbuds in and music turned up as loud as it would go. The movers walked by with cardboard boxes of my

stuff.

See more of Story Wars

"Careful with that one!" I said to the man in the black hooded sweatshirt in sloppy black ink.

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Regardless of the words, he wasn't careful enough. Even over the music, I could hear my records shatter.

That's how I ended up in the last record store in Baltimore, with James staring at me across the counter with disdainful eyes.

"Here you go, emo girl!"

I snatched it from his hands. "Yeah, whatever."

"Good luck with your record."

JAMES IS NOT ESSENTIAL TO CURRENT MISSION. MOVE ALONG.

I moved along.

the end

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